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Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TUNIS 00252 121035Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----------121040Z 015856 /21
R 121043Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5456
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

S E C R E T TUNIS 0252

EXDIS

DEPT PLS PASS DOD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINR TS LY AG
SUBJECT: ALLEGED QADHAFI DECISION TO "UNITE" LIBYA AND
TUNISIA

1. ADMIRAL BAGLEY, CINCUSNAVEUR, WAS RECEIVED BY TUNISIAN MINISTER OF DEFENSE FARHAT ON JANUARY 11, SHORTLY AFTER HIS ARRIVAL IN TUNISIA ON OFFICIAL VISIT. ATMOSPHERE WAS CORDIAL AND MEETING SERVED USEFUL PURPOSES.

2. IT WAS OBVIOUS THROUGHOUT MEETING THAT LIBYA STILL UPPERMOST IN MINDS OF TUNISIAN DEFENSE OFFICIALS (DEPUTY DEFENSE MINISTER BENNOUR, SECRETARY GENERAL ALOUINI AND NAVY CHIEF OF STAFF JEDIDI ALSO PRESENT). FARHAT STATED DURING MEETING THAT NEW SOURCE OF CONCERN WAS INTELLIGENCE REPORT RECEIVED BY GOT CONCERNING SECRET MEETING HELD BY QADHAFI ON APPROXIMATELY JANUARY 1 IN WHICH HE ALLEGEDLY OUTLINED HIS PLANS

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FOR "UNITING" WITH TUNISIA. QADHAFI SUPPOSEDLY TOLD MEETING THAT WHILE IN MOSCOW HE HAD OBTAINED ASSURANCES THAT IF HE DECIDED TO "TAKE OVER" TUNISIA, MOSCOW WOULD MAINTAIN HANDS OFF POLICY (I.E. WOUL NOT OBJECT TO LIBYAN USE OF SOVIET ARMS FOR THIS PURPOSE). QADHAFI WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE HAD MADE DEFINITE DECISION TO UNIFY LIBYA AND TUNISIA BY ANY MEANS, INCLUDING FORCE,

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AND THAT HE BELIEVED HE COULD COUNT ONALGERIAN SUPPORT
OR NEUTRALITY IN THE EVENT HE ATTAKED TUNISIA.

3. FARHAT SAID HE TOOK REPORTED QADHAFI REMARKS SERIOUSLY.
HE BELIEVED THAT QADHAFI HAD DECIDED THAT EGYPT WAS
MORE THAN HE COULD CHEW AND THAT HE WOULD NOW TURN
HIS ATTENTION TO TUNISIA. FARHAT SAID HE BELIEVED
QADHAFI COUNTING ON EGYPTIAN, IRAQI AND PALESTINIAN
MERCENARIES, WHOM HE NOW RECRUITING, TO MAKE UP FOR
LACK OF TRAINED LIBYANS. FARHAT ADDED THAT IN EVENT
OF HOSTILITIES HE EXPECTED EGYPT AND ALGERIA WOULD
BOTH REMAIN NEUTRAL.

4. QUESTIONED FURTHER AT DINNER THAT EVENING ABOUT
SERIOUSNESS OF REPORTED QADHAFI THREAT, BENNOUR SAID
IT "VERY DISTURBING"FRESH INTELLIGENE ACQUIRED ONLY
"THREE OR FOUR DAYS AGO".
KING

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED DOD.

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NNN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TERRITORIAL UNIFICATION, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, ALLEGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 12-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977TUNIS00252
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770011-0832
Format: TEL
From: TUNIS
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770157/aaaabxvr.tel
Line Count: 81
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: cc4570da-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3610866
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ALLEGED QADHAFI DECISION TO \"UNITE\" LIBYA AND TUNISIA
TAGS: PINR, TS, LY, AG, (FARHAT, ABDALLAH), (BAGLEY, DAVID H), (QADHAFI, MU\'AMMAR)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/cc4570da-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009